

KEY LIME PIE

He sits down to a rich cultural menu of menudo & Dos Equis beer in a little chili cafe hidden in dunes & sea oats with a blackboard menu that changes with the cooks. He listens to Tampa Red's Hokum Band wondering if it's his hangover or Tampa Red has added a guitéron to kazoo & guitar; but all sound seems to meld melodiously with female laughter & the whir of the grease-trap fan & the shrimpers' cosmic head-down appetites ending with a chorus of Darbukka toothpick percussion. Outside the window shrimp are running & kids are playing on the public dock where brown pelicans wait for hand-outs from the tourists & he's thinking of a yesteryear when smugglers pushed madeira & put claret out of business & he's wondering if the smile of the waitress is sincere as his slice of home-made key lime pie as he points out to her the antics of a Luna moth trying to mate on the ceiling with a Monarch butterfly.

ON AN ISLAND IN THE SILENCE OF THE STREAM

"She is the young lady that observes long silences," said the hotel porter, "sometimes for weeks and months in a row."

Next time he'd choose an island without the competition of dogs and roosters; only a woman like this one, hauteur of a wet cat looking back at him as he sat on the veranda fanning his face with his white Panama hat in the soft warm rain; odeurs that stirred strange hungers coming from beyond the mangroves that could be goat meat roasting on the oil-drum fires, something to remember when he is half a globe way listening for a silence in the stream.

THE COLLECTOR

1960, in detroit, he drove a cadillac el dorado convertible, unashamed of its elongated fins; then flushed out a business deal for a '65 ferrari 275 gtb that stood out in motor city like a sore metallic thumb. when things got bad he wangled a '69 camaro, a mustang convertible & a pontiac gto. in a succession of slow trades he again climbed the economic ladder to a stretch limo, a big

thirsty beauty he called hussein, the oil hound.
it's been over a year now, hussein still shows
an arrogant power, burning oily loops of 50 wt.
as it idles by the curb.

DIACRITIC

I knew she was literary.
She even had diacritic marks
Over the tattoos on her arms
With acute & grave accents
As well as the cidilla & circum-
Flex. I swore she wore
The very flesh of poetry & once
Aroused to indignation by my stare
She dropped her Levis & mooned me.
No big deal. I was only going to ask her
To a poetry reading at the American
Sunbathing Association, plenty of time
To know each other because that would be
Sometime late next summer.

BARBARA BY THE SEA

— for Barbara at 92,
Avila Beach, California

When a new taco stand
Pops up in Avila Beach
Miss Barbara tastes
Each offering
Like Minerva strolling
Through the Parthenon.
"If I want it hot
I'll sit on my stove,"
She says to an anxious
Chef, "but your enchilada,
Honey, was made for the gods."

BE PROUD YOU ARE AN INTELLECTUAL

When the old Russian poet visiting our school
told us about Stalin, long Siberian nights
and fellow prisoners leaching salt
from the guard's beating canes
for their rations of frozen potatoes
we stopped badgering our parents
for more all-day burritos and double-orders
of fries
washed down with perplexing decisions
between coke, pepsi, mountain dew and doctor